

## **2.3 An Arts and Entertainment Strategy**

### **2.3.1 Goal: A Regional Cultural District**

Downtown Blacksburg will become Southwestern Virginia's premier center for performing and visual arts.

### **2.3.2 Background**

Downtown Blacksburg is already an emerging arts destination. This concept was greatly enhanced with the renovation of the historic Lyric Theater that has become an outstanding arts resource for the community. The Lyric is augmented by the Haymarket Theatre in Squires Student Center, the Armory Art Gallery, and a number of private galleries throughout downtown.

Exciting plans are underway, however, that will amplify the existing resources of Virginia Tech and create a multi-faceted arts campus directly adjacent to downtown Blacksburg. This opportunity (though it may be a longer term one) is something the community should embrace as one of its goals.

### **2.3.3 Assets/Opportunities**

- Existing facilities such as the Lyric Theatre, the Haymarket, and the Art Gallery in the old Armory Building
- Plans by the University to expand arts facilities to this part of Virginia Tech's campus.
- Strong local arts groups.

### **2.3.4 Liabilities/Challenges**

- Uncertainty about when new arts facilities might be constructed by the University.
- No joint marketing for the arts facilities in downtown to date.
- Limited public art in the downtown.

### **2.3.5 Objectives**

- A. Encourage and support the University's interest in developing arts facilities downtown.
- B. Explore opportunities for enhanced community arts facilities.
- C. Create public art in the downtown area.

- D. Develop venues for outdoor performances.
- E. Establish an arts district linking the University's facilities, the Lyric Theatre, and other community facilities.

### 2.3.6 Action Strategies

#### Demonstration Projects – 2001-2002

- *Begin joint planning with the University for future arts facilities.* Arts facilities have been in the University's master plan for a number of years. The community will need to rally behind Virginia Tech and support adding arts facilities to this portion of the campus if such a project is to succeed in the short term. Funding from a variety of sources (including the State of Virginia) will be necessary. The community can influence these resources to be responsive to the University's needs. Furthermore, the Town and the University can work together to develop creative ways to finance support facilities for arts venues (such as parking). These efforts will require a strong partnership.
- *Explore creative partnerships to develop community arts facilities.* Further partnership opportunities exist with the community arts groups as well. It is likely that a University related arts facility might not be the most appropriate way to accommodate local arts groups. A separate facility might need to be explored. This, too, is likely to occur only through creative partnerships with groups such as Montgomery County Schools, the New River Valley Community College, Virginia Tech and others.
- *Market concerts on Henderson Lawn, Art Along the Fence, and other activities to the greater region.* Figure 6 shows an ad concept marketing community arts festivals to the region. Getting the word out about arts events and facilities will be a major short-term task.
- *Examine location for regional history museum.* A regional history museum has long been a community goal. Several locations may be appropriate for this including along Draper Road in some of the historic houses that front this street.



Figure 6: Ad concept for art festival in Blacksburg.

#### Next Steps – 2002 and Beyond

- *Coordinate with Virginia Tech on an "Arts Campus" adjacent to downtown.* Exhibit 13 shows potential arts facilities on the Campus of Virginia Tech. While these drawings do not exactly depict the facilities, they do represent the urban design principle of keeping frontage along Main Street and College Avenue.

Exhibit 13: Conceptual Plan  
for the Virginia Tech Arts  
Campus

[Click here to see Exhibit 13](#)